

Minutes of the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG), held on 15th July 2009 at the Institution of Highways & Transportation (IHT)

Present:

John Dowie (JD)	DfT RLTD (Chair)
Mostaque Ahmed (MA)	DfT RLTD
Jim Barton (JB)	Transport Scotland
Matthew Lugg (ML)	UK Roads Board
Richard Morgan (RM)	Welsh Assembly Government
Andrew Murray (AM)	DRD Northern Ireland
Greg Perks (GP)	UK Bridges Board
Dana Skelley (DS)	UK Lighting Board
Derek Turner (DT)	UK Network Management Board
Mary Lewis (MLw)	IHT
Justin Ward (JW)	IHT (Secretariat)

In attendance (for items 1 -4):

Mike Bordiss (MB)	Independent Consultant/ATKINS
Lila Tachtsi (LT)	ATKINS
Alan Taggart (AT)	ATKINS

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Apologies were received from Andrew Jones. Mostaque Ahmed from the DfT was attending the UKRLG for the first time.

2. Note of last meeting and matter arising

a) Note of last meeting

The notes of the last meeting were agreed

b) Matters arising

None

3. Winter Maintenance Final Report

(ML) introduced the item on Winter Maintenance noting the approach taken and some of the challenges involved. (MB) gave an overview presentation on the project and issues involved with the review. (JD) outlined the next steps: the Secretary of State would take receipt of the report at the end of July 2009 and in October - at the return of Parliament - a decision statement would be issued. A response to the Select Committee report would be submitted to the Committee by the DfT next week.

The UKRLG agreed the substantive recommendations in the report with a couple of small changes recorded in the meeting. The UKRLG agreed that by 22nd July the final drafting points would be completed. The UKRLG supported the view that updates to the Code of Practice – Well-Maintained Highways was worth undertaking and should be ready for October pending the ministerial response to the report. The

UKRLG agreed that the report would be publicly available from the end of July 2009 and following discussion agreed that it was important to involve Local Government Association (LGA), Transport for London (TfL), and the Highways Agency in the Media Handling Strategy and that IHT would act as a 'hub'. (DT) noted that David Sparks from the LGA could be a good spokesperson to identify. The UKRLG agreed to launch the press activities on the 3rd of August 2009. (MLw) noted that the current contract had not identified press activities and that if a press release went out in IHT's name then there might be misunderstanding over who's product the Winter Maintenance review is. The UKRLG supported this view and (JD) noted that he would provide some additional funding commensurate with the task IHT would need to carry out; (ML) noted that the CSS had a media company that would be worth considering engaging with to support such a task. The UKRLG noted the process this would take and broadly supported active engagement with the trade press (NCE and Surveyor notably) – possibly through the opportunity for Matthew Lugg to give interviews (in his role as Chairman of the Steering Group for the Winter Maintenance Review) to selected publications. The UKRLG agreed that hard copies of the report should be made available (and possibly available at the 'Cold Comfort' conference on 16th September 2009).

The group thanked ATKINS for a very good piece of work completed to fairly tight timescales.

Action: UKRLG agreed to the substantive recommendations and agreed to submit the report to the Secretary of State – with a letter from the Chairman of UKRLG and the board chairmen.

Action: ATKINS to re-draft the Highways Agency case study with input from (DT)

Action: In the definitions for the document ensure that the term 'network' only applies to carriageways

Action: ATKINS to re-draft paragraph 5.28 and confirm with (DT)

Action: (JD) to commission further updates to WMH to take account of the Winter Maintenance report recommendations – to have the updates ready in October 2009

Action: ATKINS to agree presentation style with (ML)

Action: (JD)/(ML)/(DT) to agree the final sign-off to the report on Winter Maintenance with final draft comments sent to ATKINS by 22nd July

Action: IHT to act as 'hub' for Media Handling Strategy and work in co-ordination with (DS)/(DT)/(ML) and the LGA on the approach taken in developing media handling strategy with a set of Q&As

Action: Devolved administrations to brief their own ministers on the Winter Maintenance review

4. Research

(JD) introduced the item on research noting that it would be important to determine the role of the UKRLG in relation to research and helpful to narrow down the list of options in the research paper (UKRLG Paper 11/09). (GP) asked for clarification on the role of UKRLG as a 'funder' of research and (JD) confirmed that there was limited scope for this out of the £600k UKRLG budget and this would continue to be limited in the future. (DS) noted that the UKRLG should play more of a strategic role and help identify gaps for the industry. The UKRLG agreed that it could act as a 'strategic hub' for research.

Action: (JD) to develop resourced specification for UKRLG to act as a strategic hub for research and circulate specification to UKRLG members for comment

5. Governance

a) Terms of Reference

(MLw) noted that at the last meeting of the UKRLG the group agreed that the Terms of Reference should be updated to ensure that they focus on what the group should be doing in combination with focusing on strategic issues. The Terms of Reference developed had taken account of the Wigginton Review. The UKRLG noted some small changes to the Terms of Reference and supported publication of these on the website once the changes had been made. Following discussion the group agreed that the Terms of Reference for the individual boards should be developed around a core of standard elements and presented to the boards for discussion.

Action: (JW) to update UKRLG Terms of Reference and arrange for publication on the UKRLG website

Action: (JW) to work with Board Chairs on developing and tailoring the 'core content' for their boards and update the Terms of Reference for the relevant board

b) Business Planning

The UKRLG supported the format of the business plan and with the agreement that a column for 'resources' should be added. The group agreed that they owned the plan and it was their role to develop it. The group agreed that a 'strategic planning session' would be useful.

Action: (MLw)/(JW) to have discussions with members individually over the summer, to prepare an outline for detailed discussion and completion. November UKRLG to have a longer meeting to finalise the plan.

6. Commuted Sums

(ML) noted that CSS was content with putting the final guidance on its website.

Action: Commuted Sums Guidance to be published on the CSS website.

7. Communication

a) (JW) asked for feedback on Transportation Professional content to ensure that the UKRLG is pleased with this product and noted that the Roads Board would be in the October journal and the Network Management Board would be in the December issue.

b) The UKRLG supported the functional specification on an updated UKRLG website and agreed it would be worth moving this forward.

8. Climate Change

(GP) noted that it would be useful to arrange for a suitable speaker to present to the UKRLG on climate change and its relationship with design, construction and maintenance.

The group clarified that focusing on 'adaptation' to climate change as opposed to exploring the impact of the highway network as a 'generator of' Co2 would be more relevant to the group's activities.

Action: Agenda item at the next meeting to explore how Climate Change might affect the highway network, how to adapt to this and to also consider the wider financial/political issues.

9. Earthworks and Geotechnics

(GP) noted that it was raised at the UK Bridges Board that there was nothing in the Bridges Board Terms of Reference on Earthworks and Geotechnics. The group noted that if this is an area that the UK Bridges Board would like to work on then that would be supported.

10. AASHTO

(GP) suggested a similar 'daily bulletin briefing could be issued by UKRLG. The group noted issues around resources for such an activity.

11. Updates from Boards

The group noted that they would have appreciated the minutes from the boards to be circulated prior to the meeting – as opposed to being available at the meeting. (JB) noted that timing for meetings could be an issue and (JW) confirmed that not all board chairs had checked their minutes. The group agreed it would still be worth circulating what is available.

Action: (JW) to circulate board minutes with the papers for the November meeting for UKRLG

12. Dates of next meeting

11th November 2009 (inc. Strategic Planning Workshop on UKRLG Business Plan)